

HOBBS AND THE ABSOLUTE STATE

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Hobbes proceeds to fight another round with his old enemy, the Roman Church, the deadliest rival of the authority of Kings. But in reacting against it the Reformed Churches fell into another dangerous error. ** For after the Bible was translated into English every man, nay every boy and every wench that could read English, thought they spoke with God Almighty and understood what he said Every man became a judge of religion and an interpreter of the Scriptures to himself." What to the Puritan was the chief glory of the Reformation was to Hobbes merely a fount of sedition. No wonder Ranke speaks of his estrangement from the world around him. He is equally severe with members of Parliament, and opposition to ship-money excites contempt. Since the burden of defending and governing the Kingdom was entrusted to a certain person, he argues, was it fair that he should depend on others for the means of performing his task ? If he is thus dependent they are his sovereign, not he theirs. Ordinary citizens are quite unfit to rule. Many could not read; many could only learn their duty from the pulpit, and unhappily it was thence that they learned their disobedience. The preachers in turn were corrupted by the universities, which played the part of the wooden horse in the siege of Troy. He despaired of any lasting peace till they directed their studies to the teaching of absolute obedience to the kws and the public edicts of the King ; for the King's kws were the kws of God.

After this tendencious prologue he summarizes the story of the twenty years strife in the same scolding vein. There are no greater vices, follies and crimes than those of the majority of the Long Parliament. What greater crime could there be than killing God's anointed? The kwyers were blind to the fact that the kws were made by the

King, not for
 his own advantage, but to oblige his subjects to
 peace and
 justice. "AH men are fools who pull down
 anything which
 does them good before they have set up
 something better in
 its pkce." The continual changes of regime excite
 measureless
 contempt. Cromwell's method, he observes,
 was^to get the
 supreme power conferred on him by Parliament.
 ** Therefore
 he called a Parliament and gave it the supreme
 power, to the
 end that they should give it to him again. Was
 not this witty? *
 Yet he prefers the Protector to the Rump, the
 expulsion of
 which, he deckres, was more applauded by the
 people than
 any of his victories. All the Parliaments since
 the reign of

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